

Legislative History Related to Farm to School

1946: National School Lunch Act

On June 4, 1946, President Harry S. Truman signed the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), which permanently authorized the National School Lunch Program. The legislation was passed in response to concerns that “many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems.” Its purpose was to provide a market for agricultural production and to improve the health and well-being of the nation’s youth.

1966: Child Nutrition Act

On October 11, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Child Nutrition Act (CNA), which added a new dimension to school food services. In its Declaration of Purpose in Section 2 of the Act, the Congress stated, “In recognition of the demonstrated relationship between food and good nutrition and the capacity of children to develop and learn, based on the years of cumulative successful experience under the NSLP with its significant contributions in the field of applied nutrition research, it is hereby declared to be the policy of Congress that these efforts shall be extended, expanded, and strengthened under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture as a measure to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children, and to encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods, by assisting States, through grants-in-aid and other means, to meet more effectively the nutritional needs of our children.” CNA expanded the NSLP, established the School Breakfast Program (SBP), extended the Special Milk Program (SMP), and provided Federal funding assistance towards non-food purchases for school equipment.

2002: Farm Security & Rural Investment Act

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, known as the 2002 Farm Bill, authorized the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Pilot in four states and one Indian Tribal Organization (Zuni, New Mexico). The purpose of the pilot was to determine the best practices for increasing fruit—both fresh and dried—and fresh vegetable consumption in schools. The Pilot is now known as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

2004: Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended the NSLA to encourage improved access to local foods in schools “through farm-to-cafeteria activities, including school gardens, that may include the acquisition of food and appropriate equipment and the provision of training and education.” The Act required every school district participating in the NSLP and/or SBP to establish a local wellness policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year. Additionally, it required schools to set goals for nutritional standards of foods available in schools, nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. The legislation requires that a broad group of local stakeholders be involved in designing the policy to ensure that the diverse needs of the community are met, including members of the school board, school administrators, representatives of the school food authority, parents, students, and members of the public.

2006: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act

This act appropriated a one-time funding of \$6,000,000 to further expand the FFVP to include: Utah, Wisconsin, New Mexico, Texas, Connecticut, and Idaho. Currently, the FFVP is nation-wide in selected schools in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

2008: Consolidated Appropriations Act

This Act expanded FFVP nationwide in selected schools in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. It also provided approximately \$9.9 million to begin program operations for School Year 2008-2009.

2008: Food, Conservation, and Energy Act

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, known as the 2008 Farm Bill, amended the NSLA to allow institutions receiving funds through the Child Nutrition Programs to apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products. This applies to operators of all of the Child Nutrition Programs, including the NSLP, SBP, FFVP, SMP, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), as well as to purchases of fresh produce for these programs by the Department of Defense (DoD). In addition to this, the Farm Bill also:

- Retains the minimum of \$50 million annually for purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for use in schools and service institutions participating in programs under NSLA, and allows that these amounts may continue to be spent through DoD Fresh Program;
- Clarifies that nutrition education under an NSLA "farm to cafeteria" pilot program should promote healthy food education;
- Gives priority to projects that can be replicated in other schools; and
- Authorizes hands-on gardening pilot programs at "high-poverty" schools in up to five States.¹

2009: Agriculture Appropriations Act for FY 2010

The Agriculture Appropriations Act—which provides funding for most of USDA's programs—has many positive impacts. The Act increased investment in rural communities to create wealth, utilizing resources to help focus USDA initiatives on renewable energy, broadband infrastructure, and local and regional food systems; increased access to safe and nutritious food by providing funds necessary to meet the demand for USDA's nutrition assistance programs to promote healthier diets; and provided funding for a school community garden pilot program authorized under Section 18(g)(3) of the NSLA.

¹ See www.ers.usda.gov/FarmBill/2008/titles/titleIVNutrition.htm

2010: Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act

In December of 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act was signed into law. This Act authorized and funded USDA to provide technical assistance and competitive matching farm to school grants. The grants may be used for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships and implementing farm to school activities. According to the Act, individual grants are not to exceed \$100,000. Highest priority will be given to those projects that make local foods available on the menu; serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches; encourage the participation of school children in farm and garden-based agricultural education activities; demonstrate collaboration between schools, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, agricultural producer groups, and other community partners; include adequate and participatory evaluation plans; and demonstrate the potential for long-term program sustainability. USDA will receive five million dollars in October of 2012 (i.e., fiscal year 2013) through fiscal year 2015 to administer these grants and provide technical assistance.